

Arts & Entertainment In Garland, 1800s—Present

From this community's 19th century days, Garlandites have entertained and expressed themselves through art forms. Primitive as their daily existence may have been, they sought ways to enjoy beauty and emotional power. All settler wagons, though stripped of civilized comforts, carried experiences, imaginations, feet, hands and voices. Tucked among household tools and implements would have been harmonicas, and even a fiddle or two. Using whatever resources they possessed, if only eyes and ears, hardworking locals looked beyond the basics to brighten their lives artistically.



While almost all settlers farmed, they also bartered particular skills needed in sparse populations. Brick masons, carpenters, leather workers and tailors found plenty to do between crop seasons. Doubtless some of that work was artfully expressed, as were their musical offerings. Nobody observing fine stitch work or quilt designs from early times could question the artistry of the creators.

"The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls."
- Picasso

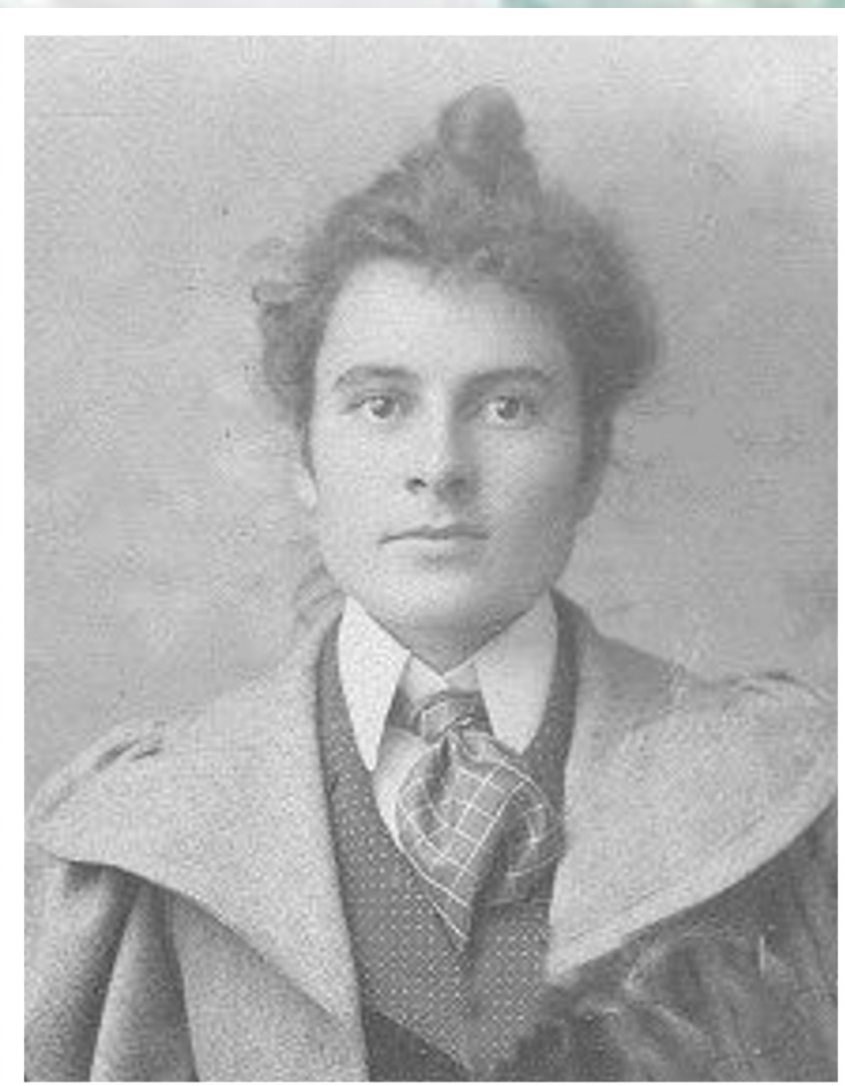
Population growth justified venues large enough for groups to share expressions. Commercial buildings, lodge halls, schools and churches enabled more elaborate performances and recitals than homes could have hosted. New men and women in town assured new artistic adventures. While musical offerings may have been the most common, debates, declamations, plays and readings occasionally erupted. And visual arts always provided inspiring backdrops.

Upon this historic base our artistic tradition grows. Garland's facilities and talent continue drawing applause from those appreciating more than a minimum.





G.W. and Kate James pose here with daughter Lottie and son Horace ca. 1881.



Ida Mae Handley

With the City Grocery underneath, this second story performance space was perfect for the Garland Band.

1889

The diary of George W. James remarks about going into town to “**The Literary**,” a series of commentaries, debates, readings and the like.

1897

September 11—A group of women, led by Ida Mae (Mrs. Peter) Handley, take the train from Garland to Wylie to confirm rumors that a literature study club was meeting regularly in the neighboring community. This recon mission leads to the formation of Garland’s **Shakespearean Twelve**. After flourishing for a while, the club is forced to disband in January of 1900 when a number of members move away.

1900s

Libbie Pilliod remembers “the **Shiloh Literary Society**, also at Lawler and Naaman [schools]. We had some fine and interesting speakers, too. We had debating programs, dialogues, recitations, and readings. We all loved the old-fashioned spelling matches.”

1906

Garland Coronet Band begins regularly playing for several events around town.

1908

Garland Band is formed.

November— **Garland Symphony Military Band**, consisting of 19 men and counting, connects itself with the Modern Woodmen of America Lodge. Practice is every Monday and Thursday night. Having recently purchased folding chairs for their hall, they are soon to order uniforms.

1909

January—C. H. Lister, founder and conductor of the **Garland Band**, resigns and is replaced by Prof. Julius Wanek of Royse.

1910s

In her 1986 Garland Perspectives interview, Gladys Nash Peavy describes local presentations within the **Chautauqua** movement in the early 1900s. “Circuit” or “Tent Chautauqua” features music and lectures on various topics.

1910

Ida Mae Handley organizes **Bayview Century Club**, a new women’s study club with former Shakespearean Twelve members and some newcomers. The organization functions for a short period, but as there were no babysitters, all the children went along. Each member had to hitch up her buggy or walk to the meetings. Under these circumstances, making club meetings was such a chore the club disbanded.

Garland Band folds.

1911

April—The **Garland Band** is resurrected and will “appear at all of Garland’s big events and every Friday night” according to the *Garland News*.

July—The **Garland Band** leases the second floor of the new brick building at 524 Main St. on the south side of the square for an opera house and public meeting hall. Equipped with 300 folding seats and ventilated on 4 sides by 20 windows, a stage and scenery were later installed. Today, this space is the second story of Baker’s Furniture.

1914

September—The **Lyric Glee Club**, a famous quartet of singers, instrumental musicians and comedians, perform in the school auditorium. General Admission is 50 cents for adults and 35 cents for students.

November—The **Lyric Theatre** opens in the Murphy building on the north side of the square, which later becomes the easternmost bay of Jones Hardware & Furniture Co.



Garland’s Lyric Theatre on the north side of the square in 1914, indicated by the movies (serials and shorts) being shown: *Million Dollar Mystery*, *The Baggage Smasher* and *Lola*. Admission booth shows 10-cents.

1915

May—A free concert is planned at the School Auditorium with vocals from Mr. Chapman of Southern Methodist University (which officially opens in the fall of this year) and piano accompaniments by Miss Lucy Woodward of Dallas. The program selected “will appeal to every person in the community, of whatever taste, as it is a splendid combination of the light, the popular and the classical.”



Lottie Watson.



1922 ad from *The Garland News*.



1924 ad from *The Garland News*.



Carl Martin (C.M.) Brown ca. 1920 led Garland Christian Church Orchestra.



Garland Choral Club on the front steps of the Hunt Building of First Baptist Church.

1917

June 14—**Poet Followers Club** is founded by Ida Mae Handley and Lottie Watson and meets on a weekly basis.

1918

June—J. F. Henderson, the new photographer for *The Garland News*, organizes a **brass band**.

1922

July 3 & 4—**Ernest Latimore's Temple of Joy and Radio Show** under the Big Tent Theatre in Garland. Show includes a 25 person novelty orchestra, dramatic playlets, big time vaudeville and lasts 2 ½ hours.

Municipal Band is formed.

1923

May—The **City Orchestra** plays for the regular monthly dinner of the Chamber of Commerce. “The orchestra has improved wonderfully and is a wonderful asset to the town,” and will have Sunday afternoon concerts on the Square.

October—The **Garland Municipal Band**, with 24 members, takes the Interurban Rail to Sherman Fair Grounds for a band contest which they won with 80 ½ points to Denton's 66 points. After the contest the band performs on the courthouse square, where the band's mascots, Willie Mae Williams and Thelma Vidler sang their famous song, “When the Leaves Come Tumbling Down.” On the return trip the Interurban stopped at Van Alstyne, McKinney and Richardson, where the band also played. They are welcomed by a large crowd on the Garland Square with enough money collected to buy them uniforms.



Garland Municipal Band ca. 1920s.

November—**Garland Municipal Band** gives a series of concerts on WFAA radio. A number of telegrams and letters complimenting their performances are received from as far away as Havana, Cuba and Anniston, Alabama.

November—An orchestra was organized at the home of Miss Katie Lemmon with the following members: R. L. Goodson, J. R. Cowell, Corinne Lyles, Willie Williams, Herbert Axe, Lee Warren, Donald Squibb, Cecil Flook and P. W. Fisher. Miss Lemmon will conduct.

1924

May—**Garland Band** travels to Rowlett to perform a concert on the square which is enjoyed by a large crowd.

June—**Harve Holland's Comedians** play under the **Big Tent Theatre** with a concert band and orchestra, a play and vaudeville acts. The Big Tent Theatre had seats for 1,000 people. The show is “conceded to be one of the highest class dramatic shows playing in the South.”

September, **Garland High School Orchestra** is formed, led by Mr. Christian Franke, who is also a purveyor of musical instruments.

1925

Garland Christian Church Orchestra, led by Carl M. Brown with J.R. Cowell on coronet, Miss Ewing on violin and piano, Corinne Brown on saxophone and R.L. Goodson on drums, performs in Rowlett.

1926

January—**Garland Band**, under the leadership of J.R. Cowell, gives a concert at the school auditorium. Admission is 20 and 35 cents.

September—**Garland High School Choral Club** is formed, with Mrs. H.B. Philips leading the charge.

1931

The **Women's Study Club** is federated with approximately 150 members. The club emphasizes a pursuit of knowledge, and while study of the Bible and Texas History are regular programs, many programs covered the arts including the study of poets, musicians and novels. This will come to be the longest running women's organization in the history of the city.

1932

The **Garland Story League** is organized by Lillialma (Mrs. W.H.) Bradfield and meets monthly. The purpose of the club is to revive and encourage the art of storytelling as a vital educational force in the community for the up building of character and to foster work in adapting and writing stories.



Clubwoman Lillialma Bradfield.